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(Provisional Agenda item 4(i))

STANDARDIZATION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

(Commission decision M (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Commission decision M (45).

Eleventh Meeting of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies (Report: ECE/STAND/32)

2. The Meeting, held in May 1990, adopted a streamlined programme of work merging the two previous sub-programmes "Certification" and "Testing" into a new programme element entitled "Conformity assessment". A new programme element was added to the sub-programme "Harmonization" in order to provide scope for practical steps (seminars, consultations, technical assistance, etc.) to assist member countries in meeting new economic and market developments.

Seminar on International Standards for Environmental Protection

3. A Seminar on International Standards for Environmental Protection was held on 9 May 1990. A summary of the Seminar discussions is available from the secretariat upon request. During the Seminar the problem of harmonizing methods for evaluating environmental quality was stressed. A working group has been requested to consider this question when reviewing the ECE Standardization List.

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Meeting of Rapporteurs

4. At the invitation of the Government of the USSR and pursuant to a decision taken at the Eleventh Meeting of Government Officials, the Rapporteurs and Co-ordinators appointed by that Meeting met in Leningrad and Moscow in October 1990. The Rapporteurs endorsed the idea of holding seminars/workshops on matters of standardization and related activities to assist member countries in transition in any interested ECE member State. It was recalled that in connection with the economic reforms in central and east European countries, new national standardization principles and practices would have to be established in these countries and the related activities (e.g. conformity assessment and metrology) be re-organized.

Seminar/Workshops on standardization and related activities

5. At the invitation of the Government of Romania and in conjunction with the meeting of rapporteurs and co-ordinators to be held in Romania, the first two seminars/workshops on the theme of conformity assessment will be held in Brasov and Bucharest in September 1991. By the end of 1990, four other ECE member countries had indicated their interest in hosting such seminars/ workshops in the field of standardization and related activities in the latter half of 1991 or early in 1992. Consultations are under way with these countries to ascertain suitable venues, subjects and sectors of industry to be dealt with. It has been agreed that in principle the host Government should be responsible for defraying local costs, but that ways of funding the travel costs of foreign experts should be sought. In most cases, the duration of seminars/workshops would be one day.

Work on standardization by other subsidiary bodies in the ECE

6. Accounts of the work on standardization of the Commission's Principal Subsidiary Bodies (in particular the Committee on Agricultural Problems, the Working Party on Coal, the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, the Inland Transport Committee and the Conference of European Statisticians) are contained in their reports to the forty-sixth session. An inter-divisional team continues to ensure liaison between secretariat staff servicing relevant meetings.

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7. By virtue of decision O (45) adopted by the Commission at its resumed forty-fifth session on 14 December 1990, the status of the Meetings of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies was changed to that of a Working Party on Standardization Policies.

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8. In the light of the above, the Commission may wish:

(a) to take note of the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission in the field of standardization and related activities (E/ECE/1240) and the report of the Eleventh Meeting of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/32);

(b) to confirm that the First Meeting of the Working Party on Standardization Policies will be held in Geneva from 13 to 15 May 1991;

(c) to convene a Second Meeting of the Working Party on Standardization Policies in the first half of 1992;

(d) to request the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its forty-seventh session on the implementation of this decision.